

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8370

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6073

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, IS

SUBJ: ALLON'S VIEWS ON LEBANESE SITUATION

REF: BEIRUT 11748

1. IN COURSE OF SEPT 20 RADIO INTERVIEW (FULL TEXT WAS CARRIED BY FBIS NC 201146 SEPT 75) ON NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO CURRENT LEBANESE SITUATION IN LOW-KEY MANNER. IN ANSWER TO INTERVIEWER'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER SITUATION MIGHT BE CREATED REQUIRING ISRAELI INTERVENTION, ALLON SAID, "NO, WE DO NOT HAVE TO INTERVENE IN WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE LEBANON, SO LONG AS IT IS A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES". (OFFICIAL GOI TEXT.) AT SAME TIME, HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO EVENTS IN LEBANON, "ESPECIALLY WHEN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES ARE LIABLE TO INTERFERE IN WHAT HAPPENS THERE". ALLON WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY POWER TO INTERFERE THIS TIME--A POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO 1958 LANDING OF U.S. MARINES. ADDRESSING HIMSELF DIRECTLY TO SYRIA, HE CONTINUED AS FOLLOWS: "BUT I SHOULD NOT LIKE SYRIA, FOR INSTANCE, TO INTERPRET THE NEW SITUATION, IN WHICH NO GREAT

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POWER INTERVENE, AS GIVING HER A LICENSE TO INTERVENE HERSELF".

2. COMMENT: MOST STRIKING ASPECT OF ALLON'S COMMENT IS HIS CAREFUL EFFORT TO AVOID INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC. AS BEIRUT REFTEL OBSERVES IN FINAL PARENTHETIC OBSERVATION, ALLON CLEARLY WAS NOT THREATENING LEBANON WITH PROSPECT OF IMMINENT IDF INTERVENTION. AT THIS JUNCTURE, ISRAEL'S STANCE APPEARS TO BE TO MAINTAIN A CLOSE WATCH ON THE SITUATION BUT TO AVOID REACHING ANY HARD POLITICAL AND/OR MILITARY DECISIONS. SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE REGARDED BY THE ISRAELIS AS AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS MATTER, WITH POTENTIAL REPERCUSSIONS NOT ONLY FOR SECURITY SITUATION ON NORTHERN FRONTIER, BUT ALSO FOR LARGER ISSUES OF ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS, INCLUDING NEGOTIATING PROSPECTS. WE BELIEVE THAT ISRAELIS ARE COMMITTED, FOR VARIETY OF REASONS NOT LEAST OF WHICH IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH US, TO CONTINUING THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING EFFORT DESPITE MANIFOLD PROBLEMS IT PRESENTS TO THEM. THIS IS LIKELY TO ACT AS A SIGNIFICANT CONSTRAINT AS THEY CONTINUE TO ASSESS HOW BEST TO PROTECT THEIR NORTHERN BORDER AGAINST TERRORIST INFILTRATION.
TOON

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